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YOUR TALENTS--LET'S NOT WASTE THEM.

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AMERICAN WOMAN POWER NEEDS TO BE MORE FULLY UTILIZED TO MEET THE NATION'S MANPOWER REQUIREMENTS. PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS ARE THE FASTEST GROWING CAREER FIELDS, AND MEN ALONE CANNOT MEET THEIR MANPOWER DEMANDS. CLERICAL WORK AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO SHOW THE SECOND AND FASTEST RATE OF GROWTH. SALES OCCUPATIONS ARE ALSO EXPECTED TO GROW RAPIDLY. THE PROSPECTS ARE GOOD FOR THE WOMAN WHO WANTS TO RETURN TO THE LABOR FORCE. MORE WOMEN ARE WORKING -- 28 MILLION WERE IN THE LABOR FORCE IN 1966. EARLIER MARRIAGE AND CHILD BEARING, LIGHTER HOUSEHOLD TASKS, BETTER EDUCATION, AND AVAILABILITY OF JOBS HAVE MADE THIS POSSIBLE. BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT PROGRESS HAVE BEEN RECEDING RAPIDLY. THE FEDERAL EQUAL PAY ACT AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 HAVE ASSURED EQUAL PAY AND EMPLOYMENT REGARDLESS OF SEX. MUCH HAS BEEN DONE TO BAN DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF AGE. TODAY THE WOMAN WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO BE A WORKER IS BETWEEN 45 AND 54 YEARS OLD. THE MIDDLE-AGED WORKER HAS AS GOOD A PERFORMANCE RECORD, A BETTER SAFETY RECORD, LOWER TURNOVER AND ABSENTEEISM, AND MORE ABILITY TO WORK WITHOUT SUPERVISION THAN THE YOUNGER WORKER. HOWEVER, SHE MAY STILL ENCOUNTER OBSTACLES WHEN SHE LOOKS FOR A JOB. THE PAY IS STILL RELATIVELY LOW, AND THE JOB IS OFTEN BELOW THE LEVEL OF HER APTITUDES AND SKILLS. JOB COUNSELING AND RENEWAL OF SKILLS AND TRAINING WILL IMPROVE THE JOB PROSPECT. THIS ADDRESS WAS GIVEN TO A BACK-TO-WORK SYMPOSIUM FOR WOMEN WHO WANT TO RESUME THEIR CAREERS, SPONSORED BY STERN BROTHERS AND AMERICAN GIRL SERVICE, NEW YORK CITY, JANUARY 25, 1967. (FP)

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YOUR TALENTS--LET'S NOT WASTE THEM

Address by
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A Back-to-Work Symposium for Women Who Want To Resume Their Careers
Sponsored by Stern Brothers and American Girl Service
January 25, 1967
New York City

I'm delighted to join with you in this symposium. All over the country meetings such as this are being held and are similarly well attended. Employers, national and State organizations, local communities, and government at every level are facing up to the need for fuller utilization of our womanpower. And women themselves, particularly mature women who have reared their children and whose household responsibilities have lightened, are eager to have the opportunity to develop their skills and abilities to the full and to put them to use, not only in paid employment, but also in rewarding volunteer service.

The need to draw more fully on the talents of women is clear. Last year, in addressing the winners of the Federal Woman's Awards, President Johnson said that the national economy is "crying out for the services of women." In the next 10 years, he predicted, "we will need 900,000 additional school teachers and college instructors, a million additional specialists in health services, 800,000 additional science and engineering technicians, 700,000 additional scientists and engineers, and 4½ million more State and local employees, exclusive of teachers."

Adding up the requirements in these fields alone, we will need 110,000 additional trained specialists every single month for the next 10 years.

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Where will these professional and technical people be found? Certainly not among men alone. Unless, as the President pointed out, we begin to open more opportunities to women for training and employment in these shortage occupations, the needs of the Nation will not be met.

The President was speaking primarily of our growing requirements for highly trained professional people. Looking ahead to 1970, these are the career fields which are expected to grow the fastest. But there will be a great demand, too, for supportive people: health aides; teacher, librarian, and social worker assistants; and a very wide range of other subprofessional personnel who, through lack of recent or previous training, cannot qualify for top-level, highly specialized jobs.

The occupational category expected to be the second fastest growing one, in the next 3 or 4 years, is clerical work. Right now there are large numbers of job openings, here in the New York metropolitan area, that have been unfilled for more than 30 days, for secretaries, stenographers, and typists; bookkeepers and cashiers; telephone, shipping, receiving, and stock clerks. There will be increasing job opportunities, too, for bank tellers, payroll clerks, and receptionists, to mention just a few more of the leading kinds of jobs these clerical occupations include. This is the field in which more women find employment than in any other.

There is good news, too, for those who have an interest in the service occupations. These include practical nurses, attendants in hospitals, beauticians, the people needed to serve and prepare food in our hotels and restaurants, those who are engaged in all the public housekeeping fields, among many others. These are the kinds of jobs in the category expected to show the third fastest rate of growth.

Sales occupations are also expected to grow rapidly, looking ahead to 1970. There is a particular shortage here in New York for people in this field.

Clearly, the prospects are good for the woman who wants to return to the labor force. And more and more women are saying that this is what they want to do. It may be helpful to you, if this is your ambition, to know how many women have been making this choice in recent years.

Actually, 28 million women were in the labor force last year--that is, they were in gainful employment or were actively looking for work. Nearly half of all women aged 18 to 64 were workers.

When we are young--let's say between the ages of 18 and 34--we women are not much more likely to work today than women of the same age were back in 1940. About half of us are now in the labor force when we are 18 to 24 years old. By the time we reach 25, a large proportion of us have married and have begun to raise our families. Between the ages of 25 and 34, the proportion of women in the labor force falls to about 2 out of 5--only a little higher than it was 25 years ago. But there has been a tremendous change in recent years as to how we use our time after we've passed the age of 35.

During the period 1940 to 1966, the number of working women aged 35 to 44 years more than doubled, the number aged 45 to 54 more than tripled, and the number aged 55 to 64 increased more than fourfold, in comparison with an increase of only about one-fourth in the number of women workers 18 to 34 years of age. The woman today who is most likely to be a wage earner is 45 to 54 years old--more than half of all women of this age are workers.

The more education a woman has, the more likely she is to work. Particularly is this true of the middle-aged woman. People always seem to find it surprising when we tell them that of all women who are aged 45 to 54 and who have had 5 years or more of higher education, over 80 percent are now in the labor force. It is about 60 percent for college graduates and about 52 percent for those who are high school graduates or who have had some college training who are in this age group.

These are the new facts of women's lives. We marry younger--half of us by the time we are 21. We bear our children when we are younger. Half of us have had our last child by the time we are 30. Once our children are in school, a growing number of us seek wider horizons. The lightening of our household tasks has given us another gift of time. We are better educated than ever before. About three-quarters of our girls graduate from high school, and nearly half of them go on to college. We have a real interest in the world about us. We have greater skills than ever before.

We have looked for jobs because we have needed the money to help educate our children, to raise our living standards, and to add to family security. Some of us, not so pressed by economic necessity, have had a no less valid motivation to use abilities in self-fulfillment and in contribution to others in the world around us.

In these postwar years, as more women than ever before have sought employment, fortunately for them and for our economy the jobs have been there to obtain.

Our Nation made up its mind 20 years ago, when it passed the Employment Act of 1946, that we know enough about what makes our economy tick to be able to provide work for all. We don't as yet have an A-1 record

in achieving this objective, but it's far, far better than it used to be. We have added nearly 5 million women to the labor force since 1961, while at the same time reducing general unemployment by more than 40 percent. So women don't need to feel that they're taking jobs away from others when they seek employment. Our society can use the talent and abilities of all those who want to work.

Looking ahead, the employment picture for women is brighter than ever before for many reasons. Our Labor Department experts tell us that between 1964 and 1970, the number of women workers will rise an estimated 17 percent, as contrasted with an expected 9-percent increase in the number of men workers. This faster increase in women's employment is anticipated because men are now more fully employed than women. It is women who constitute a reservoir of underutilized skills, which can be drawn upon to a relatively greater degree--assuming, of course, that we keep our economy moving ahead at the high levels of production and employment to which we are as a people now committed.

Barriers to women's employment progress have been receding rapidly. Three and one-half years ago a Federal Equal Pay Act was passed by Congress, assuring all people of equality of pay for work of equal effort, equal skill, and equal responsibility. Thirty-three of our States give women the same assurance, and the States in which most of you live--New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut--are included in the list.

And then there is the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of sex as well as on the bases of race, color, religion, and country of origin. Eleven of our States as

well as the District of Columbia have enacted similar statutes--New York among them. (New Jersey and Connecticut have not as yet followed suit, but I believe it won't be long before they do.)

More and more of our States have moved ahead to ban discrimination on the basis of age, too. New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey are among the 22 States which have done so. The passage of these laws doesn't always guarantee an open door to employment opportunity to the older worker, but it assuredly helps; and they are evidence of our society's improved intent with respect to its mature citizens. Our record is much better than it used to be. Unemployment among women aged 45 to 54 and 55 to 64 is now lower than among women in all the other age groups.

Perhaps these laws reflect our fortunate discovery that the rate and quality of the output of the individual are affected more by individual differences than by age differences. The middle-aged worker is a very real asset. For example, a study of clerical workers--a group especially subject to age restrictions--revealed that differences in the hourly output by age groups were for the most part insignificant. A large proportion of the older workers exceeded the average performance of younger workers. Moreover, workers in the older age group had a steadier rate of output from week to week. Similar illustrations might be cited.

And older workers compare well with younger workers on many other counts as well. Their safety records are equal or superior to those of younger workers. Their average rates of turnover and absenteeism are lower. Often the mature worker has the ability to work with less supervision and with greater loyalty, discretion, initiative, and judgment.

An increasing number of employers are taking a more positive attitude toward women's employment. Old prejudices and outworn myths are gradually being dispelled.

I don't by any means wish to suggest that everything is rosy. It isn't. The abilities of women are still relatively underutilized in our society. Many barriers still impede employment advance, but they are diminishing. Here's one cheerful bit of evidence. It's true that only 4.4 percent of all women wage and salary earners were in the $7,000 and over bracket in 1965. But this proportion was 75 percent higher than the the proportion of women in this pay bracket in 1964. That is progress.

Nonetheless, I don't need to tell you that the woman who wishes to begin or resume work in her middle years may encounter some obstacles when she looks for a job. She may find work without too much difficulty, but it is often below the level of her aptitudes and skills.

Some of the speakers who will follow will offer excellent counsel and advice to help minimize these pitfalls. Let me say just a word or two, too, about some of the problems the mature woman returning to work may confront.

Nothing is a greater barrier than the "confidence crisis"--the fear that because one hasn't worked for some years one has lost one's touch. All too many middle-aged women jobseekers are beset by hesitation and fears. Can I adjust to new challenges? new situations? learn new techniques and procedures? Can I compete with or work under the supervision of a younger person?

Good counseling can be strategic at this time of decision and adjustment--to help evaluate aptitudes, to suggest the type of employment

opportunity most suitable and most likely to be available. Often one needs the helpful guidance of a counselor especially trained in the knowledge, understanding, and techniques needed to best assist the mature woman. In your kits you will find a little booklet, prepared by the Women's Bureau, on some of the main counseling and vocational guidance services available in the New York area. We hope you will find this helpful.

Read about various kinds of jobs as you make up your mind about new directions. The Women's Bureau has also contributed a reading list to your kits. We hope these references will be stimulating.

One other word of general advice. The better and more recent the education and training, the better is the job prospect, the larger the contribution you may be able to make, and the higher the remuneration you are likely to receive. It is very desirable that old skills be renewed, that new knowledge be mastered.

All of you who have come today because you find it heartening to know that "business needs you" should realize that you are needed wherever there are jobs to do, not only in the world of work, but also in the rewarding volunteer services. The world has never been a more exciting place. And there have never been greater opportunities open to the woman who seeks them and comes to them eager and ready to give of her best.